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Campus sex assault rules fall short, prompting overhaul call

By HEATHER HOLLINGS-WORTH

MISSION, Kan. (AP)—What Karla Arango says started as a dorm-room sexual assault got even worse as word spread around campus. Her attacker's fraternity brothers snubbed her, she says, whispering about her in the cafeteria, blocking her phone number and unfriending her on social media. Soon her grades were slipping.

Arango's experience in her first year at Northern Kentucky University highlights what experts see as deep-seated problems with Title IX, the 1972 federal civil rights law that prohibits sexual discrimination in education. It turns 50 this month.

Heralded as a game changer for female college athletes, the law also is supposed to protect sexual assault and harassment accusers like Arango, giving them options like moving dormitories or even getting their attackers removed from the school.

In practice, the law's protections fall short, accusers and advocates say.



University of Oregon students and staff protest on the steps of Johnson Hall on the UO campus in Eugene, Ore. Thursday May 8, 2014, against sexual violence in the wake of allegations of rape brought against three UO basketball players by a fellow student.

Associated Press

Polarizing regulations finalized under former President Donald Trump have discouraged students from

coming forward with abuse allegations. Those who do face a live hearing and cross-examination by a

person of their alleged attacker's choosing. The rules also narrowed the definition of sexual harassment

and allowed colleges to ignore most cases arising off campus.

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Continued from Front

President Joe Biden and other critics say the rules, finalized in 2020 by then-Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, fail to adequately protect sexual assault victims, deter them from reporting misconduct and go too far in shielding the accused. Biden is expected to announce new rules as soon as this month.

In the meantime, many students have opted out entirely, never reporting the abuse. Or they've chosen to go an informal route, in which the accused might be asked not to take classes with the accuser, or to switch schools — often with no mark on their record.

Arango ultimately decided not to pursue her case, and nothing happened to the other student.

"I felt like my identity was beginning to form, and then it was completely stripped away," said Arango, now 21 and heading into her senior year. "Everyone just saw me as this girl that was lying about being sexually assaulted. And I was spiraling really bad."

The Associated Press typically doesn't identify people who say they have been sexually assaulted, but Arango allowed her name to be used. She serves on a caucus of survivors for End Rape on Campus, a national advocacy group.

Sexual assault is commonplace on college campuses. Thirteen percent of college students overall and nearly 26% of undergraduate women reported non-consensual sexual contact, according to a 2019 Association of American Universities survey of 181,752



Vice President Joe Biden, shouting "no means no," speaks at a rape-awareness event at the University of Colorado, in Boulder, Colo., Friday, April 8, 2016.

Associated Press

students on 27 campuses. Rates were nearly as high for students who are transgender, nonbinary or otherwise gender nonconforming.

Only about one-third of the female accusers reported what happened, according to the survey. Doing so often ends badly, according to Know Your IX, an advocacy group that has found students who report abuse often leave school, at least temporarily, and are threatened with defamation lawsuits.

"The current process is not really working for anybody," said Emma Grasso Levine, the manager of Know Your IX.

At some universities, the Trump administration rules have been followed by a decrease in the number of complaints addressed by Title IX offices, according to records provided to The Associated Press.

At the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 204 Title IX complaints were logged in 2019, but just 12 in 2021, records show. The number of cases that met the criteria for formal investigations fell from 27 to zero in the same period. No student has been found responsible for a Title IX violation at the university since 2020.

At Michigan State University, the number of Title IX complaints dropped from more than 1,300 in 2019 to 56 in 2021. School officials say the drop is the result of narrowed definitions in the 2020 regulations. Complaints that fall outside the scope of the federal rules now go through a similar but separate disciplinary system, officials said.

Arango's nightmare began in August 2019, when she blacked out after playing a drinking game with her new fraternity friends.

She recalls waking on an air mattress, a male student on top of her, although she had given no consent for the sex. She grabbed her belongings and headed to class, acting like nothing had happened.

She kept quiet until that October, when she told a fraternity friend but swore him to secrecy.

A few days later, she received an email from the Title IX office saying her name had been included in a sexual assault misconduct report. Her friend had shared her secret with the fraternity's president, who was a resident adviser and required to report it.

The accused student soon found out. His fraternity brothers shunned her as

she weighed whether to pursue a Title IX investigation. People were calling her a liar, she said.

Arango asked Title IX officials if the other student would be suspended or sanctioned if she filed a formal complaint. The coordinator told her the process was lengthy and that, if nothing else, she probably could get a no-contact order.

She was skipping two classes to avoid the student and his friends, on track to receive the first two Cs of her life — grades that could threaten her scholarship. Then there was the isolation. "The thing is, no one is talking to me anymore," she realized.

She put the investigative process on hold. By the time she revisited it in the spring, the pandemic was slowing everything down. Then DeVos' new regulations were announced.

"Byzantine" is the word attorney Russell Kornblith uses to describe them. He is representing three Harvard University graduate students in a lawsuit alleging that the Ivy League school for years ignored complaints about sexual harassment by a renowned professor.

He said pursuing the cases can be time intensive, dis-

tracting students from their classwork. Income disparities often play out, with affluent students able to pay for attorneys and others represented only by themselves. In some cases, accusers find themselves being questioned about their sexual past.

A process that already had seemed rough became overwhelming to Arango.

"I just saw the words 'cross-examination' and freaked out," she recalled. "I was like, 'I can't. I can't put myself through that.'"

As more complaints fall outside its scope, experts have raised alarms that colleges are increasingly judging cases in parallel campus discipline systems that don't guarantee accusers the same rights as Title IX.

Justin Dillon, a Washington-based lawyer who has defended dozens of students accused of sexual misconduct, called the cross-examination process created under DeVos an "unparalleled success," but criticized the overall handling of sexual misconduct cases under Title IX.

"It's just sort of created this kind of sexual police state on college campuses that I think goes far beyond making sure that men and women get equal access to education," he said.

Students are filing fewer sexual misconduct cases and the bulk of them — upward of 90% — are now being handled informally, said Brett Sokolow, president of the Association of Title IX Administrators. Sometimes the accused will simply agree to transfer so their new school won't know anything happened, he said.

For all the difficulties colleges have had adjudicating sex assault cases, Title IX at least holds them accountable for protecting the rights of accusers who can otherwise sue, said Maha Ibrahim, a staff attorney with Equal Rights Advocates, a nonprofit that represents survivors.

"What if it wasn't there? Then what?" she said. "You know, college campuses are just a free for all, a very dangerous place for women and for queer folks. And then what?"

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Feds taking first steps toward revising race, ethnic terms

By MIKE SCHNEIDER

Associated Press

The federal government is taking preliminary steps toward revising racial and ethnic classifications that have not been changed in a quarter century following calls for more accurate categories for how people identify themselves in federal data gathering. The revisions could open the door to changes long desired by advocates on census and survey forms. Among them are a new category for people of Middle Eastern and North African descent who currently are classified as white and efforts to make categories less confusing for Hispanic participants.

The chief statistician of the U.S. said in a blog post Wednesday that her office was initiating a formal review of the race and ethnicity classifications maintained by the Office of Management and Budget which were first outlined in 1977 and have not been revised since 1997.

The purpose of any changes to the standards will be to better reflect the diversity of the U.S., said Karin Orvis, the chief statistician,



Workers at ACCESS, the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services, help with meals for the Arab community in Dearborn, Mich., on May 1, 2020.

Associated Press

who was named to the position by the Biden administration earlier this year.

The review will wrap up by summer 2024 after getting input from government experts across agencies and public feedback, according to the chief statistician. That date would be months before a presidential election that could lead to a stop to any revisions if there's a change in

administrations. Momentum for changing the classifications grew in the years leading up to the 2020 census, but it was halted after then-President Donald Trump took office in 2017.

"I understand the importance of moving quickly and with purpose," Orvis said. "It is also important that we get this right."

Besides helping to provide a portrait of the demo-

graphic makeup of the U.S., the categories are used to enforce civil rights, voting rights and employment discrimination laws. Under current classifications, race and Hispanic origin are separate categories on census forms and surveys. Some advocates have been pushing for combining the race and Hispanic origin questions, saying the way race is categorized

often confuses Hispanic respondents who are not sure how to answer. Tests by the Census Bureau in the 2010 census showed that combining the questions yielded higher response rates.

The need to change the current standards can be seen in 2020 census results in which the "some other race" category surpassed African Americans as the nation's second-largest racial group. The "some other race" category was made up overwhelmingly of Latinos, said Arturo Vargas, executive director of NALEO Educational Fund.

"Right now, the Census Bureau knows the way it collects data is fundamentally flawed. It's confusing and distorts the true nature of our nation's diversity," Vargas said. "For the Latino population, the current construct is flawed when it comes to Latinos being able to identify themselves as Latino and by the race category." Advocates also have been pushing for a category of Middle Eastern and North African, also known as MENA, for the once-a-decade census and other federal demographic surveys. □

VP Harris launches task force on online harassment, abuse

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris and administration officials on Thursday launched a task force dedicated to fighting online harassment and abuse, which they warned can be a precursor to real-life violence.

"The internet is an essential part of life in the 21st century," Harris said, but for many — particularly women, people of color, and people who are not heterosexual — "the internet is a place of fear."

The task force will address several issues, including prevention of online abuse and services for people who are targeted. It is scheduled to issue recommendations for the federal government and private companies in 180 days.

"All of us have a responsibility to stand together to sup-

port those who have gone through this, and also recognize they shouldn't have to be alone fighting on this issue," Harris said.

Although the problem is not new, it has taken on new urgency following mass shootings in Texas and New York that were predicated by misogynist and racist commentary on social media and message boards. Harris was introduced by Sloane Stephens, a Black professional tennis player who has faced a torrent of racist abuse.

"I'm a daughter, a sister, a wife. And I am more than an athlete, more than a label," Stephens said. "Yet all of that is disregarded when people online seek to harass me and harm me. No matter whether I win or lose, someone online is mad, and they will make it

known."

After matches, Stephens said, she is worried to pick up her phone because "I know what will be waiting for me when I unlock it."

The National Security Council is working with the White House Gender Policy Council on the initiative, and Attorney General Merrick Garland and Surgeon General Vivek Murthy participated in Thursday's announcement.

Garland said the Justice Department had dedicated additional resources to issues like online stalking.

"We are committed to relentlessly investigating these crimes, bringing to justice those who perpetrate them, and providing support for the survivors," he said.

Murthy said people often turn to the internet when



Vice President Kamala Harris speaks during a meeting about abortion rights and Roe v. Wade, Tuesday, June 14, 2022, from her ceremonial office at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building on the White House complex in Washington.

Associated Press

they are lonely or looking to make connections, "yet all too often what they find instead is harassment and abuse."

"It can no longer be acceptable for a technology company to put out

a product and walk away from the responsibility for how it impacts users and communities," he said. "It can no longer be OK for social media platforms to be fertile grounds for hatred." □

Production at bedeviled baby formula factory halted by storm

By TOM MURPHY and LAURA UNGAR

Associated Press

Severe weather has forced Abbott Nutrition to pause production at a Michigan baby formula factory that had just restarted after being closed for several months, contributing to a national shortage.

Production for Abbott's EleCare specialty formula has been suspended, but there is enough supply to meet demand until production is restarted, the company said. Abbott had prioritized ramping up production of the specialty formula for infants with severe food allergies and digestive problems who have few other options for nutrition.

Abbott says it needs to assess damage and re-sanitize the factory after severe thunderstorms and heavy rains swept through southwestern Michigan late Monday. Spokesman Jonathan Hamilton said flooding hit a few areas of the factory, but he declined to provide more specific details about damage.

The storm also brought high winds, hail and power failures to Sturgis, Michigan, where the factory is locat-



An Abbott Laboratories manufacturing plant is shown in Sturgis, Mich., on Sept. 23, 2010.

Associated Press

ed. The company expects production and distribution to be delayed for a few weeks as it cleans the plant.

Once it restarts, the factory will begin with the production of EleCare and other specialty formulas. Abbott says it also plans to restart production of its Similac formula as soon as possible.

Abbott had initially restarted the factory on June 4 after it had been closed

since February due to contamination.

Abbott recalled several leading brands of formula then, including Similac. That squeezed supplies that had already been strained by supply chain disruptions and stockpiling during COVID-19 shutdowns.

The ongoing formula shortage has been most dire for children with allergies, digestive problems and metabolic disorders who rely

on specialty formulas.

President Joe Biden's administration has since eased import rules for foreign manufacturers, air-lifted formula from Europe and invoked federal emergency rules to prioritize U.S. production.

FDA Commissioner Dr. Robert Califf told a Senate committee on Thursday that government work done to increase the supply means that there will be

more than enough product to meet current demand. He also noted that other U.S. baby formula manufacturers are running their plants around the clock.

Califf said they hoped to have a "super supply" of formula to get shelves fully restocked in perhaps two weeks.

"But it's too early to give an exact estimate of what the delay will be in the Sturgis plant," Califf said at a hearing of the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions.

Califf called the flood at the plant "an unfortunate setback and a reminder that natural weather events can cause unforeseen disruptions in supply chains."

Abbott is one of just four companies that produce about 90% of U.S. formula. Hamilton said Abbott has produced 8.7 million pounds of formula in June, or 95% of what it produced the month before the recall.

The Michigan factory was closed after the Food and Drug Administration began investigating four bacterial infections among infants who consumed powdered formula from the plant. □

New Mexico reaches \$32M settlement over 2015 mine spill



In this Aug. 14, 2015, photo, water flows through a series of sediment retention ponds built to reduce heavy metal and chemical contaminants from the Gold King Mine outside Silverton, Colo.

Associated Press

By SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN

Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — New Mexico and the U.S. government have reached a \$32 million settlement over a 2015 mine spill that

polluted rivers in three western states.

Similar environmental accidents will be intolerable in the future as the region grapples with shrinking water supplies amid drought and climate change, the

governor said Thursday. "Every drop is precious," Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham said during a news conference. "If we don't have that water, we aren't growing our own food."

The spill released 3 million gallons (11 million liters) of wastewater from the inactive Gold King Mine in southwestern Colorado, sending a bright-yellow plume of arsenic, lead and other heavy metals south to New Mexico, through the Navajo Nation and into Utah through the San Juan and Animas rivers.

Water utilities were forced to scramble and shut down intake valves while farmers stopped drawing from the rivers as the contaminants moved downstream. The New Mexico settlement marks just the latest reached over the past

year. Colorado and the Navajo Nation also have inked multimillion-dollar agreements to settle claims and sort out responsibility for continued cleanup at the Superfund site that was established following the spill.

Under the New Mexico agreement, the federal government will make cash payments for response costs, environmental restoration and efforts to mitigate the negative perceptions about the area's rivers following the spill. Money also will go toward water quality monitoring and cleanup activities.

Lujan Grisham called the settlement a turning point for communities in the region.

"While the San Juan and Animas rivers have healed from the spill, it's time for

communities like Farmington, Bloomfield, and Aztec to do the same," she said in a statement, saying the money is deserved in light of the federal government's role in the disaster.

The state also received \$11 million in damages from the mining companies, and the case against the federal contractors involved is pending.

On Aug. 5, 2015, Environmental Protection Agency contractors attempting cleanup work caused the release of the toxic wastewater. The plume eventually reached Lake Powell in Utah.

Although the rivers are now safe for irrigation and other uses, state and local officials have said the stigma associated with the event has had lasting effects on the region's economy. □

Dutch agency prevented Russian spy from working at ICC

By MIKE CORDER
Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands

(AP) — A Dutch intelligence agency said Thursday that it foiled a sophisticated attempt by a Russian spy using a false Brazilian identity to work as an intern at the International Criminal Court, which is investigating allegations of Russian war crimes in Ukraine.

The General Intelligence and Security Service of the Netherlands said the 36-year-old man, identified as Sergey Vladimirovich Cherkasov, worked for Russia's shadowy GRU agency and tried to gain access to the global court based in The Hague under the cover name of Viktor Muller Ferreira.

"If the intelligence officer had succeeded in gaining access as an intern to the ICC, he would have been able to gather intelligence there and to look for (or recruit) sources, and arrange to have access to the ICC's digital systems," the Dutch agency said. "That way he would have been able to provide a significant contribution to the intelligence that the GRU is seeking. He might also have been able



The exterior view of the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands, Wednesday, March 31, 2021.

Associated Press

to influence criminal proceedings of the ICC."

The agency said it uncovered his identity and informed the Netherlands' immigration service in April that he was considered a national security threat.

"On these grounds, the intelligence officer was refused entry into the Netherlands in April and declared unacceptable. He was sent back to Brazil on the

first flight out," the agency, known by its acronym AIVD, said. It did not reveal how it unmasked the spy.

In March, ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan opened an investigation in Ukraine, where Russian forces have been accused of war crimes. The court also is investigating alleged crimes committed during the 2008 Russo-Georgian War and has issued arrest warrants

for three men who served in the Russian-backed self-declared republic of South Ossetia.

Court spokeswoman Sonia Robla said the ICC "was briefed by the Dutch authorities and is very thankful to the Netherlands for this important operation and more generally, for exposing security threats."

She said as the court's host state, "the role of the Dutch

authorities is key in the protection of the ICC headquarters. The ICC takes these threats very seriously and will continue to work and cooperate with the Netherlands."

In a statement about the foiled bid to infiltrate the ICC, the Dutch intelligence agency said Cherkasov used "a well-constructed cover identity by which he concealed all his ties with Russia in general, and the GRU in particular."

It said he was an "illegal" agent "who received long and extensive training." The Dutch agency even released a redacted document, dated around 2010, in which he lays out his fabricated backstory.

"Because of their alias identity, illegals are difficult to discover," the AIVD said. "For that reason they often remain undetected, allowing them to carry out intelligence activities. Because they present themselves as foreigners, they have access to information that would be inaccessible to a Russian national."

It is not the first time Russian spies have attempted to infiltrate an international organization in The Hague. □

U.N. envoy's farewell: My heart breaks for Afghan girls, women

By RAHIM FAIEZ
Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — The U.N. representative in Afghanistan lamented in her farewell statement Thursday the harsh edicts that the Taliban have imposed on girls and women since they seized power in the country, denying them the right to education and work and forcing millions to stay at home.

Deborah Lyons, who is leaving her post as the U.N. chief's special representative, said that the Afghanistan today is a very different country from the one she encountered two years ago. Her comments came in a statement that was released to the media; her successor has not yet been named.

"I could not have imagined, when I accepted this

job, the Afghanistan that I am now leaving," she said. "My heart breaks in particular for the millions of Afghan girls who are denied their right to education, and the many Afghan women full of talent who are being told to stay at home."

The Taliban overran the Afghan capital of Kabul in mid-August as the United States and NATO were in the final weeks of their withdrawal from the country. Afghanistan's new rulers quickly started enforcing a sharply tougher line, harking back to similar radical measures when the Taliban last ruled the country, from 1996 to 2001.

They issued edicts requiring women to cover their faces except for their eyes in public, including women presenters on TV, and banned girls from attending school

past the sixth grade.

At the same time, Afghanistan has seen persistent bombings and other attacks on civilians, often targeting the mainly Shiite Muslim ethnic Hazara minority.

Most of the attacks have been claimed by the Islamic State group's affiliate in the country, a bitter rival of the Taliban.

"It is an irony that now that there is space for everyone to help rebuild the country half of the population is confined and prevented from doing so," said Lyons, who was appointed head of U.N. mission to Afghanistan in March 2020.

"It is that much more painful as a woman to leave my Afghan sisters in the condition they are in," she said and added that she is convinced that a "system that



Finland's Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto, right, and Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations for Afghanistan, Deborah Lyons, left, wear protective masks prior to the plenary session of the 2020 Afghanistan Conference at the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, Tuesday, Nov. 24, 2020.

Associated Press

excludes women, minorities, and talented people will not endure."

She pledged, however, that the United Nations

would not abandon the Afghan people.

Lyons assumed her post as the coronavirus pandemic gripped the world. □

Public workers strike in Tunisia, signaling national crisis

Associated Press

TUNIS, Tunisia (AP) — A nationwide public sector strike in Tunisia is poised to paralyze land and air transportation and other vital activities Thursday with the North African nation already in the midst of a deteriorating economic crisis.

Tunisia's powerful General Labour Union (UGTT) announced the walkout, which is expected to include 159 state enterprises, on the basis of pressing social and economic demands. The union is demanding wage increases and protesting the government's planned economic reforms.

The purchasing power of Tunisian citizens has eroded since the beginning of the year amid rising prices, high unemployment and widespread poverty. The war in Ukraine has exacerbated the financial squeeze.

President Kais Saied's government unveiled plans last week to cut its massive public wage bill and said it would progressively reduce energy and food subsidies starting next year. The government said it would replace subsidies with cash handouts for low-income families.

In July 2021, Saied abruptly dismissed the government and took on sweeping



General Secretary of the Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT) Noureddine Taboubi gives a speech during a rally in front of its headquarters in Tunis, Tunisia, Thursday, June 16, 2022.

Associated Press

powers. While his critics accuse him of staging a coup, Saied said he had acted in response to widespread economic and social discontent.

Many are concerned Thursday's strike could seriously impact an already fragile economy and fuel an already tense political situation. An increasingly isolated Saied has run the country alone for 10 months, ruling by decree, while key Western allies have raised concerns of democratic

backsliding.

A meeting between the government and the UGTT was held Tuesday but failed to yield an agreement.

Hundreds of trade union members and public sector workers gathered in front of the UGTT headquarters in downtown Tunis to mark the walkout. Many spoke of their deep concern over the higher cost of living and the government's perceived inability to solve the crisis.

"We, as citizens, as public

sector employees, are burdened with a great part of the charges of state debt" union member Boubaker Ben Ali said.

Naza Zuhein, another trade unionist, told The Associated Press she attended the demonstration to express her frustration that life in Tunisia has "become impossible."

"Our wages are low and the prices are getting higher ... and meanwhile, this man (Kais Saied) is very stubborn. He is making de-

cisions alone without consulting us," Zuhein said.

At a weekend UGTT meeting ahead of Thursday's strike, hundreds of union members filled the Palace of Congress in Tunis, waving national flags and singing popular songs. The audience cheered as union president Noureddine Taboubi took the stage, promising to oppose the government's economic reforms.

Taboubi told the AP after the meeting that Thursday's strike was a necessary response to Tunisia's high inflation rate—which according to the Institute of Statistics, reached 7.8% in May and to high living costs that intensified with the Central Banks' recent decision to increase interest rates.

The union chief said the strike had the potential to set off a "social explosion" that was "normal and inevitable." Speaking Saturday, he said the walkout was not a political action but "based solely on the social demands of the working classes."

A key issue for Saied's government is the country's urgent need to secure a new loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Tunisia's fourth loan in a decade. □

France: Nearly 40 jihadis killed in drone strikes in Niger



This photo provided by the French Defense Ministry communication center and taken Tuesday Dec. 17, 2019, shows French soldiers loading a French Reaper drone with two GBU 12 missiles on Niamey airbase, Niger.

Associated Press

By DALATOU MAMANE
Associated Press

NIAMEY, Niger (AP) — French drone strikes killed

nearly 40 Islamic extremists earlier this week who were traveling on motorcycles near Niger's border with

Burkina Faso, France's military announced Thursday. In a statement, the French military called the strikes a "new tactical success" for France's counterterrorism efforts in Africa's Sahel region, named Operation Barkhane.

"Intelligence obtained from Nigerien units in contact with the column confirmed that the motorcycles belonged to an armed terrorist group moving between Burkina Faso and Niger," Barkhane said in the statement.

"In close coordination with Niger's Armed Forces, the Barkhane force conducted several strikes against the column. Nearly 40 terrorists were neutralized."

Niger's government also issued a statement, saying the jihadis were killed after an attack earlier this week killed eight security forces in southwestern Niger.

The drone strikes in Niger come as France reorganizes its military efforts in the broader Sahel region, the vast area south of the Sahara Desert where it was once a colonial power and still maintains strong economic ties. Niger has become a more reliable ally after military coups overthrew the democratically elected presidents of neighboring Mali and Burkina Faso over the last two years.

Earlier this year, France announced it was withdrawing all its forces from Mali

nine years after the French military led an effort that ousted Islamic extremists from Timbuktu and other centers in northern Mali. The decision to withdraw from Mali came amid increasing hostility toward the French armed presence and tensions with the country's leader, who led two coups nine months apart to consolidate his power.

France has said that it planned to reposition its forces from Mali to other countries in the Sahel region including Niger. Extremist violence is growing in the Sahel, including in Niger's southwest neighbor, Burkina Faso, which is battling growing jihadi attacks. □

Puerto Rico party to hold vote on its political future

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)

— With a possible plebiscite on statehood or independence for Puerto Rico looming, one of the island's two main parties said Thursday it will ask its members to reconsider or reaffirm its own stance on the U.S. territory's political future by holding an island wide vote on the issue.

The announcement by José Luis Dalmau, president of the Popular Democratic Party, follows a proposal last month by a group of U.S. legislators to hold a binding plebiscite giving Puerto Ricans three options: Become America's 51st state, become fully independent or opt for independence with free association — possibly maintaining U.S. citizenship and other ties with the U.S.. That vote would not include the possibility of maintaining the current commonwealth status.

That choice would appear to threaten the future of Dalmau's party, founded in the 1930s, which is defined by its support for the current status, under which Puerto Ricans have U.S. citizenship but the island has quasi-autonomy from the United States.



The Puerto Rican flag flies in front of Puerto Rico's Capitol as in San Juan, Puerto Rico, July 29, 2015.
Associated Press

Its main rival, the current governor's New Progressive Party, advocates for statehood.

Possible statehood will not be an option in the PDP's Aug. 14 vote. Dalmau said the current status and a free association option that he did not define would be offered. Party spokesman Ángel Raúl Matos told The

Associated Press that it's too early to say whether that would be based on the free association option that U.S. lawmakers proposed as one of three choices.

Within the Popular Democratic Party, opinions vary as to what sort of commonwealth best suits Puerto Rico. Some argue for closer

ties to the U.S. while others seek more independence in some areas.

"For decades, this issue has divided us," Dalmau said. "Since two parallel strategies and two distinct popular parties cannot exist, it's up to the thousands of (party supporters) to resolve the controversy and make the final decision."

The Popular Democratic Party has roughly 400,000 supporters on the island of 2.3 million people and it got about 32% of the gubernatorial vote in the 2020 election — just behind the New Progressive Party's 33%. Support for both parties has been eroding due to frustration over corruption scandals, economic problems and mismanagement. Dalmau, who is also the president of Puerto Rico's Senate, said he would continue to support the island's current political status, which he said was "the masterpiece of the movement's founder."

Political analyst Mario Negrón Portillo said Dalmau is likely taking the risk of holding a historic vote because he wants to put an end to the intensifying debate within the party and believes the large majority of its supporters will uphold the status quo. "This is a gamble," he said. Matos said that on the day of the vote, party officials in each of the island's 78 municipalities would recognize supporters and allow them to vote. If not, recognized, voters would be asked to fill out a membership statement. □

Bitcoin-boosting Salvadoran leader may have second thoughts

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (AP) — El Salvador's Bitcoin-boosting president may be having second thoughts about the crypto-currency, whose value has tanked in recent weeks.

According to the tracking site nayibtracker.com, El Salvador under President Nayib Bukele's administration has bought a total of about \$105 million in Bitcoin, starting last September and paying an average of almost \$46,000 per coin.

The value of that investment is now calculated to have fallen by over 50%, or around \$51 million.

So when a Bitcoin publication crowed that El Salvador has lost "only" \$40 million on its investment in the currency also known as "BTC," Bukele tweeted with

apparent incredulity Tuesday: "You're telling me we should buy more #BTC?"

Bukele became the first leader in the world to make the crypto-currency legal tender last year and was a devoted booster at least up to May, when he crowed about "buying the dip" in the crypto currency's price. But the coin has slid further since then.

Finance Minister Alejandro Zelaya sought Wednesday in an interview with a local television station to put a good face on the situation, saying that because El Salvador hasn't sold any of its Bitcoins, it hasn't really suffered any loss.

"When they tell me that El Salvador's budgetary risk has increased because of the supposed loss, that loss doesn't exist," Zelaya said.

"That must be made clear, because we have not sold." However, most companies and governments do write down the value of what accountants call an "unrealized loss," even if they don't sell the distressed asset. Zelaya also insisted the Bitcoin slide doesn't matter very much for El Salvador, saying that "this doesn't even represent 0.5% of our budget."

That might prove a hard sell in a country where about one-fifth of the people live on less than \$5.50 per day. In January, El Salvador rejected a recommendation by the International Monetary Fund to drop Bitcoin as legal tender. Zelaya said at the time that "no international organization is going to make us do anything, anything at all,"



A bitcoin symbol is presented on an LED screen during the closing ceremony of a congress for cryptocurrency investors in Santa Maria Mizata, El Salvador, Saturday, Nov. 20, 2021.

Associated Press

calling it an issue of "sovereignty."

The IMF recommended that El Salvador dissolve the \$150 million trust fund it created when it made the cryptocurrency legal ten-

der and return any of those unused funds to its treasury. The IMF cited concerns about the volatility of Bitcoin prices, and the possibility of criminals using the cryptocurrency. □



ORANJESTAD — 2021 was the official Grand Opening of Harbour House Aruba. The residence consisting of 94 units is located in the former Mar Azul building, right in the heart of Oranjestad. The two brothers Irwin J. Perret-Gentil and Alberto Perret-Gentil from PERING, one of the largest, privately-owned Real Estate and construction firms in Venezuela and Aruba, officially opened their new jewel in the presence of the invitees.

Harbour House Aruba is the ultimate smart investment or personal living space. A state-of-the-art lobby, an ocean-view gym, bar service, rooftop with 360 degrees view of Oranjestad, on-site parking, 24-hours security and a top floor lounge area with Jacuzzi's. Cherry on the cake: an infinity pool with a panorama on the harbour.

Harbour House Aruba offers cosmopolitan living in a beach-chic environment. The residence is fast-selling their studios, two-bedroom and three-bedroom units for many reasons but in a nutshell we can name: great location, great value for your money and great quality. To see exactly what still is available you may check the website which shows you a map with sold and

Harbour House Aruba officially open! 80 % sold, construction in final phase: Harbour House Aruba is ready for you!



open units. Updates on construction are also on forehand. When you live abroad stopping by to check upon your purchase is not that simple, yet with the monthly updates on their website, it is a lot easier.

Hottest condo in town

Aruba Today talked to one of the owners from New York: "This is going to be the hottest condo building on the island because this is the very first thing people see when they arrive here by cruise ship and it is the only one combining the ocean, port and city. We feel so happy to be the owner here, also, the organization is amazing. We are being accommodated in every way, the attention you get is extraordinary."

Boardwalk

Living here includes being part of Oranjestad and all its benefits. Around the Harbour House building a boardwalk is constructed allowing you to stroll along the waterfront and enjoy a drink on a terrace or dive into the art gallery, souvenir store or even have dinner facing the atmospheric harbour of Oranjestad.

The process of purchase is easy, whether you are abroad or on the island. Make an appointment through the website to visit the sales office when you are here. In that way you can actually see the unit, materials and amenities. If you are not on the island the website can help you out and the sales office is happy to send you all needed documentation for you to orientate. When agreed upon the unit you sign an agreement and move forward with the down payment which is \$ 50.000. At receipt of that amount the sales is closed and the price will not change. You know what you get and will not be surprised by price changes. The payment agreements after the deposit will be discussed and are flexible. Harbour House Aruba assist also in financing by banks.

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Honoring of loyal visitors at Divi Aruba Phoenix



EAGLE BEACH - Recently, Aruba Tourism Authority representative Mr. Mario Arends had the great pleasure in honoring many loyal Aruba visitors with their distinctive certificates. These certificates are a way to say "Masha Danki" for continuously choosing Aruba as a favorite vacation destination. The titles are as following: 10+ years "Distinguished Visitor", 20+ years "Goodwill Ambassador" and 36+ years "Emerald Ambassador".

The honoree is Mrs. Sally Parker who has been honored as a Distinguished Visitor at her home away from home.

This symbolic honorary title is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba between the 10-20-35 and more consecutive years.

Mrs. Parker loves visiting the Island for its beaches, beautiful water, weather, always perfect facilities, amazing restaurants and people of Aruba who are always friendly, helpful and fun.

Mr. Arends together with the representatives of Divi Aruba Phoenix Hotel presented the certificates to the honorees, handed over some presents and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination and as their home-away-from-home. □

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Travellers' Choice 2020

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Travellers' Choice 2020

Consumer Price Index base period June 2019 - April 2022

The Central Bureau of Statistics presents the most important findings for the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the month of April 2022.

Consumer Price Index for the month of April 2022

The CPI for April 2022 is 102.16, an increase of 0.7% compared to the index of March 2022 (101.47)

and accumulating an increase of 1.5% up to and including April of this year. The percentage change of the CPI over the last twelve (12) months (April 2021 to April 2022) is

4.7, an increase of 5.1 percentage points (ppts) compared to the percentage change for the same period of last year (-0.4%).

The period average percentage change of the CPI for the period April 2021 - April 2022 is 2.6%, an increase of 4.9 ppts compared to the period average percentage change over the period April 2020 - April 2021 (-2.3%).

During this month, four (4) of the twelve (12) sectors registered increases in prices. The increases that had the greatest influence on the CPI were registered for the "Transport" (7.5%) and "Food and non-alcoholic beverages" (1.5%) sectors, which contributed with an effect of 1.04 and 0.17 ppts, respectively. The increases in the remaining sectors had an effect of 0.03 ppts on the CPI of April 2022.

Aforementioned increases were partially offset mainly by decreases in the indices for the "Clothing and footwear" (-9.0%) and "House-

Table 1 Overview percentage change of the CPI

Index	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22
Monthly	97.57	97.39	98.09	98.53	98.84	99.24	99.31	99.90	100.60	100.07	100.44	101.47	102.16
Year-to-date	0.0	-0.2	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.6	0.7	-0.5	0.4	1.0	0.7
End of period	0.5	0.3	1.1	1.5	1.8	2.2	2.3	2.9	3.6	-0.5	-0.2	0.9	1.5
Period average	-0.4	-0.2	1.0	1.8	1.4	2.2	2.4	3.1	3.6	3.3	3.5	4.0	4.7
Goods	1.2	-0.4	0.6	0.8	0.4	0.9	-0.7	0.2	0.7	1.2	1.7	2.1	2.6
Services	-0.1	0.2	0.8	0.0	0.2	-0.2	1.1	0.5	-0.2	-0.5	0.7	0.2	0.5
CPIC	-1.4	-1.7	-1.6	-1.4	-1.3	-1.2	-0.9	-0.7	-0.3	0.1	0.5	0.8	1.2
Energy	-6.1	-4.1	-2.4	-0.9	0.6	2.0	3.4	5.1	6.7	7.5	8.2	8.7	8.8
Food	-2.6	-2.6	-2.5	-2.3	-2.1	-1.7	-1.4	-0.9	-0.3	0.4	1.2	2.0	3.0
1 adult	2,262	2,263	2,271	2,293	2,294	2,304	2,311	2,331	2,337	2,343	2,348	2,372	2,382
2 adults + 2 children	4,750	4,752	4,770	4,815	4,817	4,839	4,854	4,896	4,907	4,920	4,931	4,980	5,003

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics Aruba

hold operation" (1.7%) sectors, causing an effect of -0.25 and -0.16 ppts, respectively. The decreases in the remaining sectors had an effect of -0.15 ppts on the CPI of April 2022. The increase in the "Transport" sector was mainly due to an increase in the category "Operation of personal transport equipment" (7.7%), which contributed to an effect of 0.68. The increase in the "Food and non-alcoholic beverages" sector was mainly due to an increase in the category "Food" (1.7%), which contributed to an effect of 0.16 ppts.

The decrease in the "Clothing and footwear" sector was mainly due to a decrease in the category "Clothing" (-9.0%), which contributed to an effect of -0.19 ppts. The decrease in the "Household operation" sector was mainly due to a decrease in the category "Household appliances" (-8.0%), which contributed to an effect of -0.21 ppts.

Consumption basket

The consumption basket of the CPI consists of 408 goods and services. Compared to March 2022, 44.6% of these products had an increase in price,

causing an effect of 1.84 ppts, while 40.4% showed a decrease, contributing to an effect of -1.17 ppts and the remaining 15.0% had no change in price. The prices of goods increased by 0.8% and caused an influence of 0.49 ppts. The prices of services showed an increase of 0.5% and had an influence of 0.19 ppts on the CPI of April 2022.

Core inflation

The CPIC (core inflation) - CPI excluding the effect of energy and food - was 1.2% in April 2022. The energy index - which consists of the products: electricity, water, gasoline and diesel - was 8.8%. The food index showed an increase of 3.0%.

Subsistence level

The subsistence level for a household consisting of two (2) adults and two (2) children (aged 0-14 years) in April 2022 is Afl. 5,003, an increase of Afl. 253 compared to April 2021 (Afl. 4,750). The subsistence level for a single adult household is Afl. 2,382, an increase of Afl. 120 compared to April 2021 (Afl. 2,262).

Change in prices of crude oil, utilities, gasoline and

diesel in April 2022

The prices of utilities (electricity and water), gasoline and diesel are for the greater part determined by international crude oil prices. In April 2022 the average price per barrel of crude oil (US\$ 102.29) had a decrease of US\$ 6.29 (-5.8%) compared to March 2022 (US\$ 108.58).

The prices of electricity and water did not change compared to March 2022. Subsequently, the average electricity price per household remained at Afl. 240.09, while the average price of water per household remained at Afl. 137.05.

In April 2022 the price of gasoline registered an increase of Afl. 30.00 cents (11.5%) and had an effect of 0.61 ppts on the CPI. The price of diesel registered an increase of Afl. 45.70 cents (20.0%) and had an effect of 0.07 ppts on the CPI of April 2022.

In April 2022, utilities, gasoline and diesel as a group showed an increase in price of 4.1% compared to March 2022, and had an influence of 0.68 ppts on the CPI, while the remaining 404 goods and services, as

a group, were unchanged and had no effect on the CPI.

Change in prices of Food & catering services in April 2022

The "Food & catering services" index showed an increase of 1.2% in April 2022, after an increase of 0.6% in March 2022. The index for "Food at home" showed an increase of 1.5% in April, as nine (9) of the eleven (11) "Food at home" indices increased in April 2022. The "Bread and cereals" index registered the largest increase (3.9%) in April 2022. Furthermore, other significant increases were posted in the indices for "Fish and other seafood" (3.7%), "Milk, cheese and eggs" (2.7%), "Vegetables" (2.5%) and "Sugar, jam, honey and other confectionery" (1.8%). The only decreases were registered in the indices of "Potatoes and other tubers" (-2.8%) and "Fruit" (-0.7%).

Over the last twelve (12) months, the "Food & catering services" has increased by 7.5%. The "Food at home" index showed an increase of 8.3%, where all of the "Food at home" indices increased over the last year. The "Oils and fats" index increased by 21.1%, the largest increase among the "Food at home" food groups. Furthermore, other significant increases were posted in the indices for "Fruit" (11.8%), "Meat" (9.3%), "Bread and cereals" (9.1%) and "Fish and other seafood" (8.6%). The index for "Food away from home" increased by 0.5% in April 2022 and has increased by 5.5% over the last twelve (12) months.

In April 2022, "Food at home" and "Food away from home" as a group showed an increase in price of 1.2% compared to March 2022, and had an influence of 0.19 ppts on the CPI, while the remaining goods and services, as a group, experienced an increase in price of 0.6%, causing an effect of 0.49 ppts on the CPI.□

ARUBA CLEAN



IS MORE DUSHI

Table 5 Prices of crude oil, utilities, gasoline and diesel, 2021 - 2022

Month	2021						2022							
	Crude oil	Total energy charge		Total energy charge		Crude oil	Total energy charge		Total energy charge		Crude oil			
		\$500 kWh	501-1000 kWh	Electricity	Water		\$500 kWh	501-1000 kWh	Electricity	Water	Gasoline	Diesel		
January	51.23	31.09	31.99	240.09	137.05	185.90	152.40	83.06	31.09	31.99	240.09	137.05	230.60	195.00
March	59.10	31.09	31.99	240.09	137.05	196.30	158.60	91.32	31.09	31.99	240.09	137.05	245.70	214.10
March	62.62	31.09	31.99	240.09	137.05	208.78	170.90	108.58	31.09	31.99	240.09	137.05	261.00	228.80
April	61.52	31.09	31.99	240.09	137.05	221.60	175.80	102.29	31.09	31.99	240.09	137.05	291.00	274.50
May	65.17	31.09	31.99	240.09	137.05	222.10	174.60							
June	70.97	31.09	31.99	240.09	137.05	225.80	183.00							
July	72.61	31.09	31.99	240.09	137.05	230.70	188.70							
August	67.62	31.09	31.99	240.09	137.05	235.70	189.30							
September	70.50	31.09	31.99	240.09	137.05	233.60	185.60							
October	80.49	31.09	31.99	240.09	137.05	234.20	193.20							
November	80.13	31.09	31.99	240.09	137.05	246.40	209.00							
December	71.41	31.09	31.99	240.09	137.05	239.00	202.30							
Yearly Average	67.78	31.09	31.99	240.09	137.05	223.34	181.55	96.31	31.09	31.99	240.09	137.05	257.08	228.10

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics Aruba

Revlon, beauty icon in crowded market, files for bankruptcy

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO

AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Revlon, a cosmetics maker that broke racial barriers and dictated beauty trends for much of the last century, has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.

The company has been a mainstay on store shelves since its founding 90 years ago in New York City as it oversaw a stable of household names, from Almay to Elizabeth Arden.

Revlon failed to keep pace with changing tastes, however, slow to follow women as they traded flashy red lipstick for more muted tones in the 1990s.

In addition to losing market share to big rivals like Procter & Gamble, newcomer cosmetic lines from Kylie Jenner and other celebrities successfully capitalized on the massive social media following of the famous faces that fronted the products.

Already weighed down by rising debt, Revlon's problems only intensified with the pandemic as lipstick gave way to a new era in fashion, this one featuring medical-grade masks.

Sales dropped 21% in 2020, the first year of the pandemic, though those sales rebounded 9.2% in its most



Revlon CEO Debra Perelman, the company's first woman CEO in its 89-year-old history, shows products during an interview, Wednesday Aug. 18, 2021, in New York.

Associated Press

recent reporting year with vaccines widespread.

In the latest quarter that ended in March, sales rose nearly 8%, but still lag pre-pandemic levels in excess of \$2.4 billion a year.

The global supply chain disruptions that are hobbling hundreds of international companies in recent months were too much for Revlon, which barely escaped bankruptcy in late 2020 by persuading bond-

holders to extend its maturing debt.

There may be more corporate restructurings in the consumer products sector ahead with the threat of an economic recession and the rising costs of borrowing money.

Revlon said Thursday that upon court approval, it expects to receive \$575 million in financing from its existing lenders, which will allow it to keep its day-to-

day operations running.

"Today's filing will allow Revlon to offer our consumers the iconic products we have delivered for decades, while providing a clearer path for our future growth," said Debra Perelman, who was named Revlon president and CEO in 2018.

Her father, billionaire Ron Perelman, backs the company through MacAndrews & Forbes, which acquired

the business through a hostile takeover in the late 1980s. Revlon went public in 1996.

Perelman said that demand for its products remain strong, but its "challenging capital structure" offered limited ability to navigate.

During its heyday in the 20th century, Revlon trailed only Avon in sales. It now holds the 22nd spot among cosmetics makers, according to a recent ranking by fashion trade journal WWD. Revlon became the first beauty company to feature a Black model in 1970, Naomi Sims. In the 1980s, the company energized the cosmetics industry by putting both famous and yet-to-be-discovered models like Iman, Claudia Schiffer, Cindy Crawford and Christy Turlington front and center, promising to make all women "unforgettable."

Perelman, in an interview with The Associated Press late last year before global supply chains locked up, said she was optimistic about the future. The company doubled-down during the pandemic to get more online with services like one-on-one virtual consultations through its Elizabeth Arden line, she said. □

Court: Amazon customers can sue over lack of toxic warnings

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) —

The California Supreme Court has left intact a ruling that allows customers to sue Amazon.com for failing to warn buyers that some products it sells may contain hazardous substances such as mercury.

The court in its decision Wednesday denied a request by Amazon's lawyers to review a lower court ruling that said Amazon violated the state's Proposition 65, which requires companies to warn consumers about products they make or sell that contain chemicals known to cause cancer, reproductive harm or birth defects.

The case involved a lawsuit filed in Alameda County that said the online retail giant knowingly allowed skin-lightening creams to be sold on its website for years despite being aware of concerns about toxic mercury levels in such creams. Mercury can harm pregnant women and their fetuses. The suit alleged that some of the products produced by third parties but sold on Amazon contained mercury levels that were thousands of times the U.S. federal legal limit.

Amazon said in a statement Thursday that safety is a top priority and that the products in question have long since been removed. "We require that all products comply with applicable laws and regulations, and we have proactive measures in place to pre-

vent suspicious or non-compliant products from being listed and we monitor the products sold in our stores for product safety concerns," the statement said.

The Supreme Court's action allows the previous court ruling to be used as precedent in state courts.

However, California has such a large market share that any actions Amazon takes to comply with Proposition 65 could have a much wider impact on consumers, said Rachel Doughty, a plaintiff's attorney in the suit.

"That could look like removal of products containing carcinogens or reproductive toxins from Amazon's site, or Amazon taking



In this Oct. 23, 2018, file photo, an Amazon logo is seen atop the Amazon Treasure Truck The Park DTLA office complex in downtown Los Angeles.

Associated Press

measures to ensure that a warning is provided ... so consumers can take steps to avoid exposure to such chemicals," Doughty said in an email.

The lawsuit was dismissed in

2019 by a judge who found Amazon was protected by a section of the federal Communications Decency Act that shields websites from liability for content posted by other parties. □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 42 Nick of

1 Bank job films

6 Makes 43 Raft
finer mover11 Parting 44 Boost
word12 Sway 45 Prophetic
ones

13 Fails miserably

14 Solitary

15 Easter find

16 Hamilton's bill

18 Mariner's place

19 Tear

20 — Cruces

21 Lazy fellow

22 Oklahoman

24 Travel aids

25 Hole in the head

27 Costume parts

29 Well-being

32 NYC subway line

33 Flowed into

34 Overly

35 Film noir classic

36 Kin of Ltd.

37 Target

38 Diminished

40 Mosey along

**Yesterday's answer****DOWN**

1 Handles

8 Rec room

27 Makes

fixture

broader

9 Garage

28 Asimov

2 Slow

tempo

3 Rec room

10 Prepares

30 Hard

fixture

broccoli

worker

4 "It's a

mouse!"

17 Made of

clay

31 Big hits

33 Cuba's

5 Takes

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23 Simple

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39 H look-

24 Soccer's

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26 Station

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7 Suffering

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Shaky oasis for some polar bears found, but not for species

Three adult polar bears walk in Southeast Greenland in April 2015 over sea ice during the limited time when it is available.

Associated Press

By SETH BORENSTEIN

AP Science Writer

With the polar bear species in a fight for survival because of disappearing Arctic sea ice, a new distinct group of Greenland bears seem to have stumbled on an icy oasis that might allow a small remote population to "hang on."

"These polar bears are adapted to living in an environment that looks like the future," said study lead author Kristin Laidre, a polar bear biologist at the University of Washington, who over nine years tracked, collared and tested the all-white bears usually from a helicopter hovering the white snow and ice backdrop. "But most bears in the Arctic don't have glacial ice. They don't have access to this. So it can't be taken out of context like somehow this is like a life raft for polar bears around the Arctic. It's not. Greenland is unique."

"We project large declines of polar bears across the Arctic and this study does not change that very important message," Laidre said. "What this study does is show that we find this isolated group living in this unique place... We're looking at where in the Arctic

the shrinking Greenland ice sheet as makeshift hunting grounds, according to a study in Thursday's journal Science. However, scientists aren't sure if they are thriving because they are smaller and have fewer cubs than other polar bear populations.

A team of scientists tracked a group of a few hundred polar bears in Southeast Greenland that they show are genetically distinct and geographically separate from others, something not considered before. But what's really distinct is that these bears manage to survive despite only having 100 days a year when there's sea ice to hunt seals from. Elsewhere in the world, polar bears need at least 180 days, usually more, of sea ice for them to use as their hunting base. When there's no sea ice bears often don't eat for months.

With limited sea ice, which is frozen ocean water, these Southeast Greenland polar bears use freshwater icebergs spawned from

polar bears can as a species hang on, where they might persist."

The freshwater ice will keep coming off the ice sheet for centuries giving limited hope that this is "a place that polar bears might continue to survive" but it's separate from an overall trend of sea ice loss in the summer because of emissions of heat-trapping gases from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas, said National Snow and Ice Data Center deputy lead scientist Twila Moon, a study co-author. These bears hunt on the fresh glacial ice that has more peaks and valleys than the flatter sea ice, often in house- or car-sized bergs, called bergy bits, Moon said.

This population of polar bears are on the southeast tip of the giant island, where there are no towns. For years scientists figured these bears were part of the same population in Northeast Greenland, just roaming up and down the massive coast. But they don't, Laidre said. An unusual set up of winds, currents and geographical features around 64 degrees North make it next to impossible for bears to move north of that point, the current sends them south fast, she said.

While most bears travel 25 miles (40 kilometers) over four days, the Southeast Greenland bears go about 6 miles (10 kilometers) in the same time, the study said.

"They just stay in the same place for years and years," Laidre said.

Genetic testing Laidre and colleagues did showed they are more different from the neighboring populations than any other pair of polar bear populations on Earth, said study co-author Beth Shapiro, a University of California Santa Cruz evolutionary geneticist.

Occasionally, a bear from elsewhere breeds with the southeast bear, but Shapiro said it's infrequent and only one-way with no bear heading north and breeding with that population. □

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONG FELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

6-17

CRYPTOQUOTE

Y Q B S V H X D M X H V A X K

J X P P I. B V P P S Y A U V C G K ' B

U X K B X K T. — H D G N J S G A X D R
Yesterday's Cryptoquote: BEWARE THE HORNS
OF A BULL, THE HEELS OF THE HORSE, AND THE
SMILE OF AN ENGLISHMAN. — JAMES JOYCE

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This image released by Sceye Inc., shows one of their airships launched from Roswell, N.M., Tuesday, June 14, 2022.

Associated Press

By SUSAN MONTOYA BRY-

AN

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP)

— A technology company that wants to bring broadband to more remote areas and monitor methane and other emissions from the oil and gas industry launched one of its airships from the New Mexico desert on Tuesday as part of a key test on the way to commercial operations.

Sceye Inc. is developing a high-altitude platform station that company officials hope will provide an option other than satellites and airplanes for boosting internet connectivity and collecting data on everything from industrial pollution to wildfire threats.

It took a couple of hours for the unmanned helium-filled station to reach the stratosphere. It will maintain its position there for 24 hours, a milestone that will bring Sceye closer to commercial operations over the next 18 to 24 months.

Founder and CEO Mikkel

Vestergaard Frandsen said his team will aim for more longevity with subsequent flights from their home base in Roswell.

"Every flight is a big deal but every flight also is just another step in a process of iterative learning," he said during a virtual interview from Sceye's hangar where workers were busy prepping the massive airship for the flight.

Vestergaard Frandsen said it takes about eight months to build a station, which consists of a sleek reflective fabric designed to operate in the stratosphere at 65,000 feet (19.8 kilometers) above the Earth's surface.

NASA several years ago proposed a challenge that called for designs that could fly higher and longer than existing airships, with scientists at the Jet Propulsion Lab in California saying observations at that altitude could provide greater clarity. At the time, no airship could maintain an altitude in the stratosphere for more than eight hours.

Company tests high-altitude airship over New Mexico desert

Capable of lifting heavy payloads, Sceye's airship runs on solar panels and a bank of lithium-sulphur batteries.

"Whether we achieve our objective with this flight or achieve something that's short of the objective, we're going to learn a lot,"



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he said.

The New Mexico Economic Development Department pledged up to \$5 million in funding when Sceye announced it would locate in the state. □

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Downtown

Mariah Carey, Neptunes to get in Songwriters Hall of Fame

By MARK KENNEDY

AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Silenced for two years, the Songwriters Hall of Fame is ready to party again, welcoming a diverse set of artists for its Class of 2022, including pop diva Mariah Carey, the weirdly cool producers the Neptunes, the British electro-pop band Eurythmics, psychedelic bluesman Steve Miller and the iconic Isley Brothers.

The songwriters will be honored at a pandemic-delayed gala Thursday night at the Marriott Marquis in New York.

While a list of performers and presenters has not been revealed, past inductees have been serenaded or hailed by the likes of Lady Gaga, Stevie Nicks, Billy Joel, Jon Bon Jovi and Ed Sheeran.

Lil Nas X will also be honored Thursday with the Hal David Starlight Award, which recognizes "gifted young songwriters who are making a significant impact in the music industry via their original songs."

The ceremony has been described as a cross between the Grammy Awards and the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame festivities. Songwriters are eligible for induction after writing hit songs for at



Annie Lennox, left, and Dave Stewart of the Eurythmics performing at The Night that Changed America: A Grammy Salute to the Beatles in Los Angeles on Jan. 27, 2014. Lennox and Stewart will be inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame.

Associated Press

least 20 years and the hall includes such iconic songwriters as Burt Bacharach, Missy Elliott, Paul McCartney, Bruce Springsteen, Paul Simon, Billy Joel and Carly Simon. New annual slates are voted on by the membership.

Carey, whose hits include "We Belong Together" and "Hero," released her self-titled debut album in 1990.

With 19 No. 1 hits on the Billboard Hot 100 chart, she is only behind the Beatles, who had 20 songs top the chart. Carey is the only artist to have No. 1 hits in the 1990s, 2000s, 2010s and 2020s.

Ronald, Rudolph and O'Kelly Isley crafted three volcanic singles from 1959-62: "Shout," "Respectable" and "Twist and Shout." And

for the next 30 years — joined in 1969 by younger brothers Marvin and Ernie Isley and cousin Chris Jasper — they made even more: "That Lady," "Fight the Power," "Work to Do," "Harvest for the World" and "For the Love of You."

Miller perfected a psychedelic blues sound with such hits as "Take the Money and Run," "Fly Like an Eagle,"

"Abracadabra," "The Joker," "Jet Airliner" and "Jungle Love." Miller's "Greatest Hits 1974-78" is among the 25 bestselling albums of all time.

The members of Eurythmics — Annie Lennox and Dave Stewart — led the New Wave charge in the 1980s with songs like "Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This)" and "Here Comes the Rain Again." This year they were inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

The Neptunes are the creative, innovative production-songwriting duo of Pharrell Williams and Chad Hugo who shaped pop and urban radio from the '90s well into the 2000s thanks to crafting hits for Britney Spears, Jay-Z, Justin Timberlake, Usher and Beyoncé.

Non-performing solo nominees this year are William "Mickey" Stevenson, a producer during Motown's golden era, and Rick Nowels, who co-wrote over 60 Top 20 singles worldwide, including Belinda Carlisle's global hit "Heaven is a Place on Earth." Master songwriter Paul Williams will receive the Johnny Mercer Award, and Universal executive Jody Gerson will receive the Abe Olman Publisher Award. □

Ruth Ozeki's 'Book of Form and Emptiness' wins Women's Prize



American-Canadian writer, Ruth Ozeki, wins the prestigious Women's Prize for Fiction for "The Book of Form and Emptiness," in London, Wednesday June 15, 2022.

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Canadian-American writer Ruth Ozeki won the prestigious Women's Prize for Fiction on Wednesday for "The Book of Form and Emptiness," a

playful, philosophical novel that explores people's relationship to possessions. Ozeki was awarded the 30,000 pound (\$36,000) prize at a ceremony in Lon-

don for her story of a bereaved boy's relationship with books and the objects in his house — all of which speak to him. His world becomes increasingly cacophonous as his widowed mother deals with her grief by hoarding.

Ozeki, 66, was raised in Connecticut by a Japanese mother and an American father, and says she began thinking about our relationship with objects as she was clearing out her parents' house after their deaths.

"They were both children of the Depression, so they never threw anything away," she said. "Every piece of plastic wrap, every piece of tinfoil, had been carefully washed and saved. I

kept thinking, as I was going through this stuff, 'If only these things could talk.' " "As children, things always are speaking to us and we are always making things speak," she added. "And (I was) trying to get back in touch with that imaginary world — what it's like to be a child and see the whole world as being alive."

A professor of English at Smith College in Massachusetts, Ozeki is also a filmmaker and Zen Buddhist priest, and her novel was inspired in part by Buddhist philosophy — and by the decluttering doyenne Marie Kondo.

"What she is teaching is nothing more than a traditional Japanese way of approaching posses-

sions and objects," Ozeki said of Kondo. "You take care of your things. The built-in obsolescence that most of our objects have these days seems to me problematic." Ozeki is the author of three previous novels, including the environmentally themed "My Year of Meats" and "All Over Creation." She was a Booker Prize finalist in 2013 for "A Tale for the Time Being," a Pacific-spanning story set after Japan's 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

British journalist Mary Ann Sieghart, who chaired the Women's Prize judging panel, said Ozeki's winning novel "stood out for its sparkling writing, warmth, intelligence, humor and poignancy." □

WNBA star Sue Bird says 2022 will be her final season

By TIM BOOTH

Seattle Storm star and five-time Olympic gold medalist Sue Bird announced Thursday the 2022 season will be her last playing in the WNBA.

The announcement by Bird, 41, ended any speculation about her future; she had acknowledged in February when she re-signed with Seattle that this would likely be her final season. She strongly considered retirement after last season before choosing to return for a 19th season as a player. Bird's announcement came a day before Seattle's game at Connecticut. The Storm will close out their road trip on Sunday in New York, about 30 miles from where Bird grew up in Syosset, New York.

"As the season has gone, like I said, I pretty much knew, and then once I saw the schedule, and then once I started packing for this trip a little bit, I was like, 'Oh, this is gonna be my last time playing in New York. My last time playing in front of my family and friends.' And so that's why the timing of this is what it is," Bird said in a video posted by the Storm on social media. "I just really felt strongly about announcing my re-



Seattle Storm guard Sue Bird holds the champions trophy after the Commissioner's Cup WNBA basketball game against the Connecticut Sun, on Aug. 12, 2021, in Phoenix.

Associated Press

tirement, saying it was my last year so I can share that with my family and my friends, all the people in New York who have watched me growing up so they can come and see me play for the last time in my home state. So I'm excited about that. It's also bittersweet."

Bird is a four-time WNBA champion, 12-time All-Star and the oldest player in the league. She has spent her entire WNBA career with

Seattle since becoming the No. 1 draft pick in 2002 following her storied college career at UConn. This season is her 21st associated with the franchise although just her 19th playing after missing two seasons because of injuries.

Her resume is the envy of anyone in professional sports, let alone basketball. National championships at UConn in 2000 and 2002. WNBA titles with Seattle in 2004, 2008, 2018 and 2020,

the last coming inside the WNBA "bubble" in Florida amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Bird hoisted five additional titles playing overseas in the EuroLeague. Last year, she added a fifth Olympic gold in Tokyo to go along with the ones the United States earned in 2004 in Athens, 2008 in Beijing, 2012 in London and 2016 in Rio de Janeiro.

Bird was the AP national player of the year her fi-

nal season at UConn. She is a five-time all-WNBA first-team selection, the league's all-time leader in assists and the only player to appear in more than 500 games in league history.

She has been honored on every list imaginable as one of best and most influential players in the history of the league. And she's the standard by which other point guards are judged.

Bird turns 42 in October and was on the cusp of stepping away a year ago, and when the Storm were eliminated by the Phoenix Mercury in the playoffs, fans chanted "One more year! One more year!" as she did an on-court televised interview. Those cheers were egged on by Phoenix's longtime star Diana Taurasi, Bird's former college teammate at UConn and part of all five of those Olympic gold-medal runs.

In the end, the fans — and Taurasi — got what they wanted. Bird came back, for exactly one more year. "Sue Bird is Storm basketball," her WNBA team tweeted moments after Bird made her decision known. "Every moment, every memory has one constant. No. 10. It's time for the final chapter." □

VP Harris launches task force on online harassment, abuse

By CHRIS MEGERIAN

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris and administration officials on Thursday launched a task force dedicated to fighting online harassment and abuse, which they warned can be a precursor to real-life violence.

"The internet is an essential part of life in the 21st century," Harris said, but for many — particularly women, people of color, and people who are not heterosexual — "the internet is a place of fear."

The task force will address several issues, including prevention of online abuse and services for people who are targeted. It is scheduled to issue recom-

mendations for the federal government and private companies in 180 days. "All of us have a responsibility to stand together to support those who have gone through this, and also recognize they shouldn't have to be alone fighting on this issue," Harris said.

Although the problem is not new, it has taken on new urgency following mass shootings in Texas and New York that were predicated by misogynist and racist commentary on social media and message boards.

Harris was introduced by Sloane Stephens, a Black professional tennis player who has faced a torrent of racist abuse.

"I'm a daughter, a sister, a

wife. And I am more than an athlete, more than a label," Stephens said. "Yet all of that is disregarded when people online seek to harass me and harm me. No matter whether I win or lose, someone online is mad, and they will make it known."

After matches, Stephens said, she is worried to pick up her phone because "I know what will be waiting for me when I unlock it."

The National Security Council is working with the White House Gender Policy Council on the initiative, and Attorney General Merrick Garland and Surgeon General Vivek Murthy participated in Thursday's announcement. Garland said the Justice



This undated photo, provided by Kasumi Kobo, shows Akim Aliu, back row center, co-founder of the Hockey Diversity Alliance and former professional hockey player, posing for a photo with children of a ball hockey skills program, at the Malvern Recreation Centre, in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Associated Press

Department had dedicated additional resources to issues like online stalking.

"We are committed to relentlessly investigating

these crimes, bringing to justice those who perpetrate them, and providing support for the survivors," he said. □

McIlroy makes more noise at U.S. Open, this time with clubs

By DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

BROOKLINE, Mass. (AP) — Rory McIlroy made another bold statement at the U.S. Open. This time it was with his golf.

McIlroy has become a leading voice on the PGA Tour over the last few years, particularly with his rebuke of the Saudi-funded series that is disrupting golf. The opening round Thursday at The Country Club was a reminder he's pretty good at his day job, too.

And a few fiery moments showed how badly he wants to end eight years without a major.

McIlroy made two straight birdies late in his round to become the first player to reach 4 under among early starters, only to miss the ninth green and make his only bogey for a 3-under 67 and a share of the lead with qualifiers Joel Dahmen, David Lingmerth and Callum Tarren.

At the moment, McIlroy isn't concerned with his strong stance against LIV Golf.

"It's been eight years since I won a major," he said. "And I just want to get my hands on one again."

Even with a good start, and coming off a victory last week in the Canadian Open, it doesn't figure to be easy. The Country Club might be as accommodating as it gets all week, with moderate wind and cloud cover keeping the sun from making greens crispy and firm.

And the best anyone could do was a 67.

Collin Morikawa, trying to win a major for the third straight year, thought he



Rory McIlroy, of Northern Ireland, hits on the fifth hole during the first round of the U.S. Open golf tournament at The Country Club, Thursday, June 16, 2022, in Brookline, Mass.

Associated Press

might be able to take it deep — at least by U.S. Open standards — when he birdied the ninth hole to reach 3 under. But he didn't make another birdie and closed with a bogey when he had to lay up short of the gaping bunker on the 18th, duffed a pitch into the sand and scrambled for a 69.

"I think it will only get tougher," he said.

Jon Rahm was also at 69 after hitting wild drives on his last two holes and converting one for par, another for birdie.

It already was proving tough enough for Phil Mickelson, playing on American soil for the first time since he revealed his level of support for the Saudi-backed league and played last week in the first of Greg Norman's events.

Mickelson four-putted from about 18 feet for double bogey on the par-3 sixth, dropping him to 5-over par through six holes in the afternoon.

For McIlroy, it was his second straight major — and third time in his last four U.S. Opens — he opened with a score par. There is confidence in his game for winning last week in Toronto, and there is passion rare for a Thursday unless the game is going badly.

He tried to drive the reachable par-4 fifth hole and caught an awkward lie in the thick collar above a bunker, forcing him to stand in the sand. He hit that into another bunker, and then twice slammed the club into the sand out of frustration. But he managed to save par.

"You're going to encoun-

ter things at a U.S. Open, whether they be lies or stuff like that, that you just don't really encounter any other week," he said. "It's hard not to get frustrated because I'm walking up there going, 'Just come back into the bunker.' The thickest rough on the course is around the edges of the bunker. So I was sort of cursing the USGA whenever I was going up to the ball."

And then from the ninth fairway, his approach sailed to the right and he flung his club. He couldn't save par on that one and had to accept a 67 — not a bad start, and no apologies for his few outbursts of emotion.

"Almost to remind yourself sometimes how much it means to you," he said.

There's a lot on the table outside of golf, too, with

13 players at the U.S. Open who took part in the Saudi-backed LIV Golf last week, leading the PGA Tour to suspend those members.

McIlroy, the first to shut down talk of rival leagues in 2020, spoke passionately this week about building on the legacy handed down by Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus. For those taking the guaranteed money for 54-hole events, he said it felt like "the easy way out." But now it's time for golf, and there a vibe of relief that focus could turn to a U.S. Open that first came to Brookline more than a century ago. Thursday was more about birdies and bogeys — mostly the latter in a U.S. Open — and a place in history.

No other major is more open — roughly half the 156-man field has to qualify — and it showed with those who shared the early lead with McIlroy.

Dahmen debated whether to go a 36-hole qualifier 10 days ago in Ohio. The U.S. Open is hard and he has been beat up from travel and pedestrian results. Plus, it was supposed to rain. But he went anyway, and he qualified with one shot to spare.

Lingmerth was in the same qualifier and had to play 36 holes and then some because of a 5-for-1 playoff for the final spot. That went to Hayden Buckley — he was among those at 68 on Thursday — and Lingmerth was first alternate. He got in when Martin Kaymer withdrew.

Tarren got one of three spots in the Canadian qualifying site. □



Germany's Oscar Otte plays against Georgia's Nikoloz Basilashvili during their ATP Tour men's singles Round of 16 tennis match in Halle, Germany, Thursday, June 16, 2022.

Associated Press

No. 1 Medvedev beats Ivashka to reach Halle quarterfinals

HALLE, Germany (AP) — Top-ranked Daniil Medvedev defeated Ilya Ivashka for the second time in a week, beating the Belarusian 7-6 (4), 6-3 Thursday to reach the quarterfinals at the Halle Open.

Medvedev, who also eliminated Ivashka in 's-Hertogenbosch last week, saved

three set points when trailing 5-4 in the first set.

Medvedev returned to No. 1 in the rankings this week, with Novak Djokovic dropping to No. 3, and acknowledged that may add to his opponents' motivation in Halle.

"Some are going to be a little bit intimidated that they

are playing the World No. 1 and they have a tough draw. If they lose, maybe it is nothing special," Medvedev said. "And some on the contrary."

Maybe they don't have the best confidence at the moment and if they beat the World No. 1, that is where it starts." □